

retired to the pasturage of Beston, which the shepherd gave to his daughter, taking with them the sheep which constituted Clement's wages. Here they settled down and prospered, leaving behind them great wealth in flocks, and a numerous family of descendants. At the present day the tribe of the Clementi number 500 families, or 5400 souls. 173 539 [465] 162

Social morality is pushed to its extremest limit by the Miridite mountaineers. Though their women enjoy the greatest freedom, an unmarried girl cannot, out of doors, speak to a man not a relative of her family without risking the loss of her reputation, a calamity which few would care to survive. M. Hecquard cites a case in point, related to him by an Albanian *abbé*, which well illustrates the value that an Albanian girl sets on her honour. A man happened to remark in joke to a girl, the sister of one of his friends, and before several other persons, that he had seen her in conversation with a young man, whose name he mentioned. On the following Easter Sunday, when all the tribe were congregated, the girl, who was under fifteen, on leaving the church after partaking, as is customary on that day, of the Eucharist, called God to witness to her innocence, and seizing a pistol from one of her relatives, shot herself through the heart. Two days afterwards, the man whose careless words had been the cause of the tragedy fell by the hand of the victim's brother. 562 577 796 788 762 577 627

Among the Albanians exogamy is the general rule, which is carried out by the Miridite chieftains to the extent of carrying off by force a woman from one of the neighbouring Moslem tribes. The wives of the 583 184

not been unfrequent even in the present century, and the prevailing tendency on the part of the highlanders to become Moslems, and of the Orthodox Christian agriculturists to emigrate to Greece and elsewhere, makes it probable that in course of time the country may become entirely Moslem. 797
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Like the Kûrds, however, the Moslem Albanians have among the Turks the reputation of being but indifferent followers of the Prophet, and the same opinion is entertained by their Greek neighbours of the Albanians who call themselves members of the Orthodox Church. Christian men marry Moslem women, and *vice versâ*; the sons are brought up in the faith of Mohammed, and the daughters in that of Christ; Moslems revere the Virgin Mary and the Christian saints, and make pilgrimages to their shrines; Christians reciprocally resort to the tombs of Moslem saints for the cure of ailments or in fulfilment of vows; while Christians and Moslems alike mingle with their culture-beliefs, ancient rites and superstitious usages, which both creeds have proved powerless to eradicate. The Miridites and some tribes of Ghegs on the coast adopted the Roman Catholic creed about the end of the last century, and follow the Latin rite with some Oriental differences, as, for instance, the administration of the Eucharist in both kinds to the laity. 771
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The celebration of the Festival of Our Lady of Skodra (or Scutari), which is held on the anniversary of the departure of her image from the Latin church in that town, and in which Christians and Moslems participate, is a striking example of the half-hearted belief of the Skipetars. The story goes that, many years 796 •
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Skiperi would Our Lady of Scutari forgive her 173
children, and return to her ancient shrine.

The scene on this day in the great square building, 796
which, with its bare walls and absence of ornament, [346]
bears little resemblance to a Romish church, is most
striking and strange. The mass performed on the
occasion is listened to by a congregation whose
waists are perfect arsenals, bristling with pistols and
yataghans of every shape and pattern. There are [291]
wild-looking, fierce-moustachioed highlanders, white- [411]
kilted Mussulmans, chieftains blazing with gold em-
broidery, and milder citizens in more homely garb, all
assembled in honour of the Madonna, before whose
shrine their ancestors had worshipped. Yet, notwith-
standing their participation in the religious rites of 577
their neighbours, the Albanians are not less tenacious 579
of their own honour than of that of the creed they
profess, any insult offered to a Christian church being
promptly retaliated upon a Moslem mosque, and *vice*
versâ. Of this the following incident, which occurred
about the middle of the century, offers a striking
illustration.

A certain Tahir Mala, of Bugna, belonging to the 585
Moslem tribe of the Gascii, having married his son to
a maiden of the Christian Schialla, set out to bring
the bride home, accompanied, according to national
custom, by a numerous train, and preceded by the
tribal banners. On the return journey, they stopped,
as usual, every now and then to fire volleys into the air.
Their way, however, lying past a Christian cemetery,
the cross, standing in the midst, offered a mark for 798
their pistols too tempting to be resisted, and was soon

CHAPTER XI

MASS IN THE CHURCH OF THETHIS—A MOUNTAIN
CHIEF SEEKS A WIFE—DOWN THE VALLEY OF
THE LUMI SHALA, WHILE THE DRANGOJT FIGHT
THE DRAGON—HOW REXH CAME TO SCUTARI.

THE next morning was Sunday, and we⁷⁹⁶ were awakened by the church bell. It hung in a belfry over the padre's kitchen, and the padre pulled the rope himself. Then tucking his brown robe about his bare ankles, he descended the broken, draughty stairs to the church, and we followed him through blasts of cold rain that the wind drove through holes that had been made in the walls by the invading Serbs.

The church itself was bleak and cold; a bare^[346] room, whitewashed, with the stations of the Cross represented by crudely colored lithographs stained by the damp. A railing separated the body of the church from the altar, where a very brightly colored picture of the Virgin hung, surrounded by wreaths of paper flowers, above a rough table with a bit of brocade spread carefully upon it. We girls were given a bench inside the railing, and sat there in a row, in our many-times-water-soaked sweaters and trousers. Outside the railing all the women and

PEAKS OF SHALA

- 796 children and half the men of the village knelt on the cold floor, and their rain-drenched garments, threadbare and patched, made pools of water about their knees. The rain was still pouring down, as undiminished as a river, and the sound of it and of the waterfalls filled the chill place.

Padre Marjan began the mass, his high Albanian voice chanting the Latin, and the congregation made the responses in the same tongue. A ragged, barefooted man came to swing the censer for the padre, and Perolli, in his neat English tweeds, revolver and knife swinging at the belt, also assisted, going behind the altar with the padre to help him put a brocaded robe over the brown one, and reverently handing the cup and the wine. Rexh, in his red Mohammedan fez, watched it all with serious eyes, his head around the edge of the doorway.

- 851 After mass the padre dashed upstairs to look at our cooking dinner, and hastened down again for a christening¹. I am not familiar with Catholic ceremonial, but nothing could have been more touching than Padre Marjan, thin, worn by fasting and work, barefooted, the edge of his brown robe showing below the front hem of a white cotton garment, bringing into the arms of the Church the tiny, wrinkled infant strapped in its painted cradle. The woman who held it looked at him with a sort of apprehensive anxiety; the crowd pressed informally around them. Every time the padre turned to fetch the little glass bottle of oil, or the tin can of holy

¹[In church of Upper Thethis--[204] Analyst]

⁶⁸² dependent on charity. At best the elders fixed a sum to be paid by
 *⁶²⁸ the murderer for leave to work his own land: the money paid, the
 avenger gave his word not to molest him; or a 'strong' friend
 guaranteed his safety as he tilled his fields. This arrangement
 continued until he was killed elsewhere or the avenger consented
 to make peace.

*⁶²⁸ Various devices were tried to outwit an avenger too venomous
⁵⁶² to make the smallest concession to his 'imprisoned' enemy. The
⁸⁴⁷ commonest was for the murderer to let his land to a neutral on the
 usual Albanian terms of 'halves'. Once some men of Lurë,
 trusting to the prevailing immunity of women from attack, dressed
 in their wives' clothes and went out to work. They were soon
 discovered and compelled to return home. Frequently a woman
 was made to work alongside the men, the assumption being that
 from fear of accidentally hitting the women and so disgracing
 himself the avenger would not fire on the party. The man who
 murdered the brother of Kodhel Dede of Nezhar in Shpat belonged
 to a large family, the members of which went to work with a woman
 between every two men. Kodhel thus found it impossible to kill
 one of them and after a long period of years made peace. Some-
 times a man's wife kept watch while he worked; if she signalled the
 enemy's approach, he seized his rifle and prepared to defend
 himself. During Kodhel Dede's feud with the Trepsanishti family
 he found himself long baulked by the vigilance of his enemy's wife.

⁷⁹⁶ At last his chance came on the eve of 15 August. The wife had her
⁷⁸² mind set on making *melata* (sacrificial foods) for distribution on
 the festival, and, forgetting her husband who was at work on the
 threshing floor, she went home to make them. Kodhel, who had
 crept up through a maize field, shot her husband as soon as her
 back was turned. In the hilly landscape of Fulqet in west Mat a
 different sort of watch was kept. The 'imprisoned' men, aided by
 friends, dug a hole on top of a hill commanding a wide view. One
 of their best shots, rifle in hand, settled down in this hole ready to
 snipe the avenger if he tried to kill any of the men at work.

*⁶²⁸ Work in the fields apart, an 'imprisoned' murderer might for
⁵⁷² short periods leave his house under escort of a friend. This friend
⁶⁸² had to be 'strong', otherwise the murderer might be killed by his
 enemy, a lasting disgrace to the man whose protégé he was for the
 time being. Sometimes murderer and avenger had a common
 friend who took the former out; in that case the friend ran less risk

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THE RITUAL OF HEALING

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755 In Homoljski district the deliverer not only performed the symbolical opening of the fetters, but drew his 'brother' under the pot chains or through a hoop made by a wild-rose-tree branch which was split, or under a branch of the tree bent to the ground to form an arch. At Sokobanja, also, the rite could be done at the hearth. Brotherhood in the ordinary way could be made at the hearth and by passing under the pot chains. Touching the pot chains among the Albanians gave a fugitive the right of asylum, and automatically involved the householder's *besa*. Should a pilgrim to the monastery of St John of Rila, when creeping through an opening in a certain stone as custom recommends, not be able to get through and another gave him his hand to help him, they afterwards went before a priest to get a blessing on their accidental brotherhood.¹ In the district of Homoljski there are further purifications with water, elaborate burials or floating away of objects used in the rites, fumigation and drinking potions, e.g. of the coals used for the divining, etc., etc. The purpose that is understood is shown by the burial of a bird or animal under the tree which has been used. The rite of redemption can be done thus:

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On the eve of a feast day the seeress clears a space round a wild-rose bush which has sprouted that year, scatters ashes on the roots and leaves a piece of bread there. Crossing herself and walking backwards she repeats: 'I have seen you (this is said to the young branches), you have not seen me or him', until she catches sight of a living creature. Then she stops, turns her back to the tree, crosses herself with her left hand and says: 'As he looked at you so look at him.' She leaves immediately without looking back. Before the next dawn, she, the redeemer, the sick person and the latter's mother, go to the bush again, the mother having made ready a jar of water drawn at midnight, a bunch of basil,

¹ v. Načov, *op. cit.* The rites of creeping under something may be compared with the old Norse ceremony of making brotherhood by creeping under a 'halter of turf'; cf. K. Weinhold, *Altnordisches Leben* (Berlin, 1886), p. 287.